

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) An apparatus for coupling comprising:

a generally planar member having a pair of generally opposed surfaces and ~~an a~~ slot aperture therebetween disposed at an engaging region;

a coupling member having an external thread set and having a complementary portion for engaging the slot aperture of the planar member; and

a non-planar member having an internal thread set adapted to engage the external thread set of the coupling member thereby connecting the non-planar member to the planar member, wherein portions of the pair of generally opposed surfaces of the planar member extend into the thread set of the non-planar member.

2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the slot aperture is formed in a region adjacent an edge portion of the planar member.

4. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the planar member has more than one aperture.

5. (canceled)

6. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the coupling member has a larger diameter dimension than a thickness dimension of the planar member.

- 7 - 9 (canceled)

10. (previously amended) An apparatus for connecting two members together comprising:

a first member having a pair of generally opposed major surfaces and defining an engaging region, and a slot disposed at said engaging region;

an elongate threaded coupling member having an external thread set and an engaging portion for engaging the slot of the first member, said threaded coupling member removably engaging the slot; and

a second member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, wherein said external thread set of the threaded coupling member is threadedly received within the internal thread set, and wherein portions of the first member extend into the internal thread set of the second member.

11. (previously amended) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the elongate threaded coupling member is two longitudinal portions of a threaded shank each having an threaded exterior surface and a substantially flat interior surface.

12. (canceled)

13. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the thickness of the first member is less than a diameter of the internal thread set.

14. (currently amended) An apparatus for joining two members via a threaded coupling member, said apparatus comprising:

a first member having ~~an~~ a slot aperture disposed proximate to an edge;

an elongate threaded coupling member having an external thread set and an engaging portion corresponding to the slot aperture of the first member, said threaded coupling member removably engaging the slot aperture and extending away from the edge of the first member; and

a second member having an internal thread set sized to cooperate with the external thread set of the threaded coupling member, said internal thread set operatively receiving a portion of both the external thread set of the threaded coupling member and a portion of the first member to securely bind the first member to the second member.

15 - 19 (canceled)

20 - 24. (withdrawn)

25. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the elongate threaded coupling member is two longitudinal portions of a threaded shank each having an threaded exterior surface and a substantially flat interior surface.

26. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the thickness of the first member is less than a diameter of the internal thread set.